

Baptism With The Spirit

Romans 7:15

Sermon Transcript by Rev. Ernest O'Neill

We've been talking the past two Sundays about the biggest problem that each one of us faces in our everyday life and I think you'll agree when I tell you what it is. It's the problem expressed by Paul in that verse that we read. "I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want but I do the very thing I hate." I would bet that it doesn't matter whether you are sitting beside your wife at this moment or whether you are sitting beside a roommate or whether you are sitting beside a friend or a stranger. I would bet that every one of you has felt that as I have felt it. You've been in situations where you knew your mother was desperately wanting your love or you've been with a friend and you knew what that friend needed desperately was your understanding or your kindly patience and you've had to say after the event was over, "I don't understand my own actions for I do not do what I want but I do the very thing I hate."

Many of us remember when we were little guys or girls at home, we remember well enough throwing a tantrum because somebody took our toy or we didn't get the cookie that we wanted -- but the tragedy for most of us is it hasn't changed one bit. We just cover over the tantrum a little better or we express it a little differently to our employees or we express it as criticism if it is about our employer because you can't throw a tantrum with him so you criticize him underneath by kind of whispering stuff. Now, you know in your heart it is still the same problem. I do not understand my own actions because I don't do what I want to do. There is something in me that wants to do the right thing. I really don't want to hurt my mother like that. I really don't want to hurt my friend like that. Actually, even that professor, even though he isn't particularly kindly, I don't even want to do him the way I'm doing with this criticism talk and this backbiting. I really don't want to even hurt that woman in the office but I don't understand my actions. I don't do what I want to do, I do the very thing I hate and I have to admit that often these are the very actions and attitudes that I am criticizing in other people and I find that I am doing them myself. Maybe I see the well-known figures like Carter or Reagan or somebody else do these things and I take it out on them but I know that I'm doing the same things, just in smaller ways.

So loved ones, that's the central problem, I think, of mankind. I don't think the central problem is knowing what we ought to do. I think we all have enough information on that. I think we know what we ought to do. The problem is we can't do it. Then of course the tragedy we were talking about is that though the whole world feels that, many of us who think that we've been born of God, many of us who think we have received His Spirit, we do know that Jesus has died for us, many of us are in that position. Many of us who say we believe in God and who say we believe Jesus is our Savior and who say we believe Jesus died for us and the blood of Christ cleanses us from all sins -- many of us are in that same spot.

You see, I don't know about you, if you are not what they call a Christian or whatever that word now means or whatever being born again means, if you are not that, well, in a way you can hope that there is something that can help you. Those of us who do claim to be born of God and who do claim to know Jesus as our Savior and believe in God and all that stuff, we are in a hideous position because we've kind of taken the step that everybody says is the solution and we find ourselves still in this

spot. I'd just like to remind those of you who were here last Sunday that it is not a business of actions. Actually that is the problem with most of us who are so-called Christians. Most of us who are so-called Christians feel we ought to have at least the outward control over our actions and words that people like Socrates and Plato had, who were just noble pagans. So we believe that we ought to be able to do that because of the Holy Spirit that has made us alive to God. Of course what gets to us is that even though on the outside we seem to live by all the Christian virtues, inside there is a seething, miserable, perverse strain of irrationalism that makes us feel utterly different from the way we are behaving outside and that is, I think, what gets to us. On the outside we are churchgoers, on the outside we are being patient like Jesus, we are being honest and generous, but on the inside often, often, often we are smiling, sticking out the old hand saying, "How are you and how's the family?" and, "Oh, I thought about you," and inside we are thinking, "What a creep you are!" Or somebody sings and they sing beautifully and we go up and say, "Oh, that was a beautiful song. You have a great voice," and inside, "Really I have a better voice it is just that people don't know it."

Loved ones, that is the problem. That is the agony of it. It's simple little things. You're going out to shop and she is not right there so you want to close the door, you know, because you don't want the dog to get into the car but you close it a little firmly. "Are you ready, Dear?" That's it. There isn't peace; there isn't peace in your heart towards your loved one. There isn't real love. There is kind of irritability seething underneath. We come home at night and you're supposed to be nice to each other but you don't feel nice inside. You feel irritable and impatient and of course from time to time that breaks out into the light.

So that is the problem, loved ones. That is the central problem of mankind that even if some of us seem to gain some control outwardly of our actions, whether because we're involved in Christianity or because we're involved in Zen Buddhism or because we are involved in the power of positive thinking, though some of us gain some control outwardly over our actions and our words, yet most of us have incredible problems with inward sin. This attitude of self that we ought to get things our way and we have a right to have them our way and if they don't go our way we are impatient, we're irritable, we're resentful, we're critical, we're angry, we're jealous, we're selfish, we're self-pitying, we're resentful. Even though we keep all that stuff under wraps, it is inside us and that's of course what creates the ulcers, the adrenalin, that is what makes us old before our time. You know that? That is why at times we can't sleep at night. There is a strain in our life. That's what disease is, you see, it's a lack of ease. It's a lack of ease.

You know the way a swallow soars into the sky on the wind, effortlessly? That is the way we are meant to live, but because so many of us are hiding this garbage inside we're always on guard, we are always uptight. We're always afraid of things. Of course, what we shared last Sunday was so many us who call ourselves Christians are resorting to the same hopeless, pointless, powerless techniques and weapons that the world resorts to, to try and overcome this. That's the stupid part.

Loved ones, I say this lovingly and knowing there are some psychologists and psychiatrists in the body. I think psychologists and psychiatrists are primarily of value for showing the person who doesn't believe in God, who doesn't believe in Jesus, what life is meant to be like and easing them along towards it. In their way, expressing to them what the whole life is in Jesus. In certain situations they can help if they know the centrality of the cross, they can help a Christian. Loved ones, on the whole, Christians today are resorting to psychiatrists and psychologists, to the power of positive thinking, to how to improve your temperament, to how to win by intimidation, to sensitivity groups, to all kinds of methods and techniques which are the world's poor substitute for

God's real answer to this perverted self inside us. That's true. Loved ones, the dear ones in the New Testament, they didn't have the power of positive thinking and they didn't have all the psychiatrists and they didn't have all this other stuff that is primarily part of the common grace of God to lead those who don't believe in Him to Him. Now, God has made provision in Christ for the solution of this evil heart of darkness within us. He has made provision in Christ.

The victory is by faith and not by this endless reading of books or this endless attendance at more and more conferences or more and more sensitivity groups or more and more counseling. Love ones, the victory is by what God has done to us in Jesus because there is a further work. There is a further work. So many of us think Jesus died for our sins so that God could forgive us so that if we sinned again we would not go to hell but we could confess the sin and God, of course, would forgive us because of Jesus. That is the first way we enter into any relationship with God and that's real that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures. Each time you lose your temper, each time you get angry, each time you feel resentful, each time you feel irritable, each time you feel unclean inside, each time you feel proud, that's God. That's God tapping you on the shoulder and saying, "There is a further reason why My Son died. I want you to know that. There is a further reason why My Son died." That's what is happening, loved ones. God does not want you to go off and try to find some method of taming this lion inside by yourself. Because you actually don't want him tamed, do you know that? You don't realize it but you don't actually want him tamed. At times you like self-pity, at times you like to be irritable, at times it gives you satisfaction to be angry, so actually, you don't want him tamed and God knows that.

So it doesn't matter how many helps you get for taming him, you'll never kill the little dear, you know, you never will. You'll appear to kill him: "I'll lash you with the power of positive thinking, I'll kick you, I'll hold you down, I'll suffocate you. I am so holy I don't want anything to do with you." Actually, that's you in there. That self is you and you haven't the heart to kill that self. Actually you can't and the miracle that the Holy Spirit showed me in the Bible was that the solution to that personality of yours and mine that is so intractable and that we cannot control with books or with discipline. The miracle is that Jesus knows you intimately and He knew you actually before you were born. I know it baffles us but through Einstein we can get a glimpse of it. Jesus was actually able to foresee what you would be like today. He was. By a cosmic miracle, God the Creator who made you was able to take your preset personality, that old self of yours with its sneaking desire to be jealous and proud, and was able to put that self into His Son and on Calvary, He expressed the cosmic miracle that He did in eternity. That's all, you know. Calvary is just an expression of time and space of the great miracle that God wrought in each one of us in His Son. God put your old self into His son and destroyed it.

Loved ones, that is the key to victory in our lives. The beginning of some hope of victory in your life and mine is when we see the solution to this problem inside me is not other people, other books, my own discipline, thinking more positively about myself, trying to build up my own esteem, it's not that. It is seeing that the solution to this is what God did to you in His Son on Calvary and then you start talking to the Holy Spirit who is in you if you are a Christian, the Holy Spirit is in you. You begin to ask Him to counsel you and show you, "Holy Spirit, I believe this because God's Word says it, but I will tell you I have no idea how to bring it about in my own life." That's right, you can't bring it about. So the first thing you say is, "Holy Spirit, will you show me what is down here. I must admit I have seen a little anger, a little jealousy, a little pride but they are not very much to bother about. I have a feeling I am not seeing things as my Father sees me so Holy Spirit, will you show me myself as my God sees me?" That's the first step, loved ones. The Holy Spirit will show you. Let Him sort you out. Let him go down to the depths. Why are you angry? Why do

you get angry? Really, why do you get angry? Think of places where you get angry. Think of people and situations that you have been angry in or at. Now why do you get angry?

You see the amazing thing is you can give your answers but the Holy Spirit will take you to the heart of yourself where He will show you that really it's because you still live for yourself. However much you think you live for Jesus, you live for yourself. Really, you get angry because you still think you are God and everything should go your way and that is why you are such a burden in your life. You're trying to be God and you're not God. You're trying to make things go the way God would make them go and you can't and so it is frustrating. The first thing is for the Holy Spirit to show you these things so loved ones, first of all, speak to the Holy Spirit. Ask Him to show you these things.

Secondly see that it is by faith that the old self of yours that has been crucified is actually negated in your life and is replaced by the new self in Jesus. That's it. It is not killing your old self. It is not beating your body and trying to crucify yourself, it's not. The victory is it has been done. Already it has been done. God has destroyed you. He has destroyed that old, selfish, evil heart inside you. It's destroyed in Jesus and at this very moment it can be released in you and delivered. You can be delivered from it the moment you see that and believe it. That is why I say the victory is by faith. The victory is not by trying, the victory is not by striving, the victory is not by fighting or depressing or suppressing or believing or counseling. The victory is by faith and faith is two-fold. It is believing that it has been done in Jesus, that our old self was crucified with Christ and secondly it is a willingness to obey the Holy Spirit immediately and instantly, that's it. That is what the victory is and that's what faith is. It's belief and obedience to the Holy Spirit.

Now loved ones, that is what's called the baptism of the Holy Spirit and every time that Christians were baptized with the Holy Spirit, they experienced a releasing of their true selves. They did. You'll find if you read the Acts of the Apostles. There are six separate occasions where it is mentioned that people are baptized with the Holy Spirit. The first one was the day of Pentecost. They were facing an international crowd who couldn't speak Aramaic and the Holy Spirit gave them what they needed. He gave them an ability to speak in different languages. The next time it was at the end of Peter's sermon and there were 3,000 people who were baptized with the Holy Spirit and they didn't speak in tongues because they didn't need to speak in tongues. Their need was to enter into a close fellowship with each other and to begin to love each other and that's what happened. On the third occasion, you will remember Paul was baptized with the Holy Spirit and he began to receive power from God to explain the faith to other people. On another occasion, you remember Cornelius was baptized with the Holy Spirit and he was at that time a Gentile as were the people in his house. So God, in order to signify that they had actually been baptized with the Holy Spirit, enabled them to speak in tongues. So at the end Peter and Paul began to realize that the Holy Spirit was being poured out upon Jews and Gentiles, whatever they were.

It is interesting looking back on the two occasions when people spoke in tongues. Peter didn't say, "You remember God made no distinction between them and us but give them the Holy Spirit and give them the ability to speak in tongues." He didn't, he said, "God made no distinction between them and us on the day of Pentecost or on Cornelius's house. He made no distinction between them and us but He cleansed their hearts by faith." That is what is precious to the people who are baptized with the Holy Spirit, not so much the outward thing that happened which at times was a great love, at times was a power to preach, at times was the power to speak in a foreign language, but that the Holy Spirit cleansed their hearts by faith.

Loved ones, that's the purpose of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. He can cleanse you inside, He can make you clean inside, He can make real in you the complete destruction of you as you are and the recreation of you as you truly are in Jesus. The Holy Spirit can make that real in you this day, actually. With many of us it does take some prayer and some searching because we have so much down there that's dirty. As far as God is concerned it can happen this moment by faith if you really grasp the fact that not only Ernest O'Neil was wiped out on Calvary and no longer is alive, but that you John, Jim, Peter, Jean, you were wiped out on Calvary and you were made new in Jesus. Loved ones, that is what I'm living on. Boy, if I were you, I would start living on that, too, because then the Holy Spirit brings power in your life and replaces hatred with love and replaces impatience with patience, and replaces jealousy with a love of people. That's the miracle, loved ones, of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Now, loved ones, that's the key. That's the answer.

Any questions? I really mean it. If you want to pray after service there is a prayer room in there and you can at least begin or you can just sit where you are and there are others of us that will be here and we can talk, you know, if that will help you. Let us pray.

Lord Jesus, we thank you that there is some answer. Thank you. Thank you, Lord, that even if we don't understand it, at least there is some answer because the life that so many of us are living with these feelings and passions within us that we can't control is hardly life. So Lord, thank you that there is an answer. Thank you that there is some way in which we can be made over again completely, in which we can receive a new heart from you. Dear God, I don't think there is one of us here that doesn't want it. We know, Lord, that there is a price and the price is to be willing to live our lives for you and not for ourselves. So Lord, we know we need to count the cost and see what it is going to cost us. Lord, we would pray for each other and ask you to continue to bear in on our hearts and to prevent us from being satisfied with a life of hypocrisy and to make us dissatisfied until we are clean inside and out so that we can be what you made us to be. Now the grace of our Lord Jesus and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with each one of us now and ever more, amen.